

**Standard USHC-5:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of major social, political, and economic developments that took place in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century.

**USHC-5.7** Compare the accomplishments and limitations of the progressive movement in effecting social and political reforms in America, including the roles of Theodore Roosevelt, Jane Addams, W. E. B. DuBois, and Booker T. Washington. (H, P, E)

**Taxonomy Level:** 2.2 B Understanding/ Comprehension

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students were introduced to how building cities and industries led to progressive reforms, including labor reforms, business reforms, and Prohibition (5-3.1).

In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students studied the progressive reform movement in South Carolina, including the motivation of progressives; child labor laws; Prohibition; improvements to roads, hospitals, and libraries; tax reforms; changes to local government systems; and the roles of significant state governors and women's groups (8-6.1).

**It is essential for students to know**

It is essential for students to understand that the progressive movement developed in response to the problems of the city and the workplace in the late nineteenth century. Progressivism was essentially a movement of the middle class who objected to paying taxes to corrupt city governments and who desired better city services. Many young educated women took a role in promoting social reform. It was also the result of “muckrakers” who pointed out the corruption of machine politics, the power of the monopolists and the plight of the worker and the immigrant.

**Jane Addams** should be associated with her introduction of the settlement house, the Hull House in Chicago, where her immigrant neighbors were able to take vocational classes and receive childcare. Addams and others advocated protection for child workers. State laws limited hours and conditions and a federal child labor act was passed. However, state laws were poorly enforced and the Supreme Court overturned state laws that established maximum hours for bakers and the minimum wage for women.

The progressive movement started at the city and state level with progressive mayors and governors and gained support at the national level with the presidency of **Theodore Roosevelt**. Roosevelt was the first president to give any support to the rights of workers when he used his office as a ‘bully pulpit’ and required that the coal mine owners negotiate with their workers in order to avoid a strike. Legislation enhancing the powers of the Interstate Commerce Act over the railroads was passed during his administration. He supported government regulation of the corporation through the application of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in a series of cases that won him the appellation of “trust-buster.” He also protected the consumer with his championing of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act, promoted by the publication of the muckraking novel by Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. Roosevelt also promoted conservation. He was the founding force and candidate of the Progressive (Bull Moose) Party in 1912 which split the Republican Party and gave the election to Woodrow Wilson.

Although Wilson's role is not mentioned in the indicator, it is important for students to understand some of the legislation that was passed during his presidency in order to understand the effectiveness of progressivism. The Clayton Anti-Trust Act [which Samuel Gompers referred to as the ‘Magna Carta of Labor’] allowed labor unions to be exempt from the anti-trust laws. The 16<sup>th</sup> amendment and 17<sup>th</sup> amendments were passed. It was during Wilson's administration that the first federal child labor act was

passed. However, the Supreme Court later ruled that act unconstitutional thus limiting the progressive's impact on this problem. The Federal Reserve Act addressed the farmers' demand for a more elastic money supply that responds to the needs of the economy. [Students may be introduced at this time to how the Federal Reserve system works because that will help them to better understand its role in the Great Depression (USHC 7.4).] Other actions made credit more available to farmers, protected the 8 hour day for some workers as well as providing some workman's compensation for injury on the job. Although Woodrow Wilson was a progressive, he was also a racist and did nothing to protect the rights of African Americans.

Although African Americans participated in the progressive reform movement, they gained little as a result. Many racist actions, such as the literacy test, were promoted as being progressive because they limited the political power of the uneducated and thus limited political corruption. African American progressives took different approaches to reform. **Booker T. Washington**, the founder of Tuskegee Institute, advocated vocational education and opportunities for employment. **W.E.B. DuBois** argued that all African Americans should have the opportunity for any education that fit their talents and promoted the development of the "Talented Tenth". Most schools continued to be segregated. Although Washington lobbied behind the scenes for greater social and political rights, his public statements such as the Atlanta Compromise speech, suggested that he was willing to accept the second class citizenship offered by Jim Crow laws, literacy tests and poll taxes in exchange for jobs. These jobs were not forthcoming. DuBois voiced his militant advocacy for full rights for all African Americans through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which he had helped to found, and its publication *The Crisis*, which he edited. Washington was more acceptable to the white majority and was even invited to Roosevelt's White House, however the resulting public outcry meant that he was never invited again. DuBois militancy energized the African American community but was less acceptable to the white community. It would be many years before the NAACP would be successful in protecting the rights of African Americans in the courts (USHC 9.5).

World War I impacted the **effectiveness of progressive reform**. Wartime grain shortages and anti-German propaganda prompted the passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment, establishing Prohibition. Support for women's rights grew as a result of their contribution to the war effort and the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, granting women suffrage, was passed in 1920. Most progressive reform initiatives however stopped as a result of the war effort. The cooperation of business and government in the various WWI boards undid the rigorous enforcement of anti-trust laws and promoted the power of big business. Protection for unions was undermined by the war; the AFL's independence was compromised by their cooperation with government and the War Labor Board. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was actively prosecuted for sedition during the war and effectively destroyed in the Red Scare after the war. African Americans continued to be limited to second class citizenship despite their contribution to the war effort. Disillusionment with the progressive idealism of Wilson's Fourteen Points and the very unprogressive Treaty of Versailles undermined the commitment of American voters to progressivism (USHC 6.4).

During the 1920s the limits of progressivism were evident. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment was impossible to enforce. The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment did not result in any significant political changes as women tended to vote the way that their husbands did. The traditional Republican Party won the election of 1920 and the enforcement of progressive legislation lapsed. The idea that government is responsible for the welfare of all of the people would be revived in the New Deal (USHC 7. 5).

#### **It is not essential for students to know**

Students need not know about the origins and impetus for the progressive movement. The roots of progressivism can be found in the Liberal Republicans (Mugwumps) who advocated civil service reform in the 1880s and in the Social Gospel movement. The direct impetus for the progressive movement can be found in the return of prosperity at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which made the

radicalism of workers and farmers of the mid 1890s no longer a threat. It was the result of an intellectual climate change that promoted the role of the expert. Progressives believed that if you changed the structure of society through laws you could improve social conditions. Although students should understand the connection between Populism and progressivism, they do not need to remember which planks on the Populist platform were eventually passed during the progressive era.

Although students should understand the nature and importance of muckraking journalism, it is not essential for them to remember the names of the many muckraking journalists such as Jacob Riis, Lincoln Steffens or Ida Tarbell. It is not necessary that students be able to name progressive mayors and governors such as Robert LaFollette and the Wisconsin Idea or the many progressive initiatives at the city, state and national level. Nor is it essential for students to understand how the Federal Reserve System works to create a more elastic money supply.

Although the administration of William Howard Taft continued to break up trusts, Taft did not support other progressive reforms such as the lowering of the tariff, the reorganization of the leadership of the House of Representatives or the leadership of the department of the forestry under Gifford Pinchot. It is not necessary for students to understand Taft's role in progressive reform. This Old Guard control of the Republican Party prevented Roosevelt from gaining the nomination in 1912. It is not necessary for students to understand the difference between Roosevelt's New Nationalism and Wilson's New Freedom.

It is not necessary for students to know the role of the National Women's Suffrage Association in the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment or Alice Paul and the Equal Rights Amendment. They need not know about the role of the Anti-Saloon League or of the Immigration Restriction League in promoting temperance and immigration restriction.

It is not necessary that students be able to label the progressive movement as either liberal or conservative, although it had elements of both.

**Assessment guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments will require students to **compare** the effectiveness and limitations of the progressive movement and the roles of Jane Addams, Theodore Roosevelt, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois in promoting reform. Students should be able to **explain** the roles of each of these reformers. Assessments should also ask students to **summarize**, **classify** and identify **examples** of progressive social and political reform. Students should be able to **interpret** maps, graphs and political cartoons and **infer** their relationship to information about the time period. Students should be able to **interpret** the significance of these reformers and **infer** the impact of their proposals on American democracy